

Message Text

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17
ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-07

ERDA-05 NRC-05 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /084 W

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FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1939

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

CINCPAC

CINCPACFLT

CNO

USS TRUXTON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE WELLINGTON 3299

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MNUC, PFOR, ELAB, NZ, US

SUBJ: USS TRUXTON COMPLETES WELLINGTON VISIT

REF: (A) WELLINGTON 3219, (B) WELLINGTON 3254

1. SUMMARY: PRECISELY ON SCHEDULE, USS TRUXTON DEPARTED WELLINGTON THIS A.M. FOLLOWING SIX DAY VISIT. ENTIRE PERIOD SPENT UNDER CLOUD -- BOTH METEOROLOGICAL AND POLITICAL. HOWEVER, DESPITE LABOUR PARTY OPPOSITION, WATERFRONT UNIONS' BOYCOTT OF HARBOR AND OCCASIONAL UNFAVORABLE PRESS, VISIT WAS WELL-RECEIVED BY VAST MAJORITY OF NEW ZEALANDERS AND WAS DEFINITE CREDIT TO USG RELATIONS WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. USS TRUXTON WEIGHED ANCHOR AT 1000 HOURS TODAY, DEPARTING WELLINGTON HARBOR FOR BRIEF EXERCISES WITH RNZAF AND RNZN BEFORE HEADING FOR MELBOURNE. CLIMATICALLY, ENTIRE SIX DAYS IN WELLINGTON SAW
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MISERABLE WEATHER AS RAIN, WIND AND COLD HUNG OVER

COOK STRAITS. NEW ZEALAND HOSPITALITY APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN EVEN WARMER THAN USUAL, HOWEVER, WITH APPROXIMATELY 3000 "DIAL-A-SAILOR" INVITATIONS FOR THE 500 MEMBER CREW AND UMEROUS TELEPHONE CALLS OF APOLOGY FOR THE POLITICAL/LABOR FUROR WHICH TRUXTON'S VISIT RAISED.

3. BECAUSE SHIP UNABLE TO TIE-UP AT A WELLINGTON WHARF, ROUGH SEAS AND DREADFUL WEATHER DID RESTRICT TO SOME EXTENT NUMBER OF PEOPLE ABLE TO TOUR TRUXTON. NEVERTHELESS, NEW ZEALAND POLICE AND NAVY LAUNCHES PROVIDED FERRY SERVICE FOR TOURS, LUNCHEONS, DINNERS FOR PRIME MINISTER MULDOON AND CABINET MEMBERS, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (APPROXIMATELY 40), MAYORS AND CITY COUNCILLORS, SENIOR MEMBERS OF GNZ DEFENSE SERVICES, NEW ZEALAND POLICE, MEMBERS ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION, EDUCATIORS, EMBASSY PERSONNEL, NEW ZEALAND PRESS. REACTION OF THOSE VISITING SHIP WAS UNIFORMLY FAVORABLE.

4. WHILE NOT UNEXPECTED, LABOUR PARTY OPPOSITION AND TRADE UNION REACTION TO TRUXTON'S VISIT WAS UNFORTUNATE. WATERSIDERS "BLACK BANNED" WELLINGTON PORT, REFUSING TO WORK ANY SHIPS DURING TRUXTON'S STAY, AND FEDERATION OF LABOUR EXTENDED ITS SUPPORT TO WATERSIDER'S ACTION. RESULTING SHUTDOWN OF FERRY SERVICE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH ISLANDS WAS SPECIAL HARDSHIP TO MANY, PARTICULARLY AS IT WAS TIMED AT HEIGHT OF TWO-WEEK AUGUST SCHOOL HOLIDAYS. NZ AIR FORCE INSTITUTED AIR FERRY SERVICE TO MOVE HARDSHIP CASES (BOTH PEOPLE AND VEHICLES), BUT GOVERNMENT BACKED WAWAY FROM TEMPTATION TO TRY TO SMASH THE BOYCOTT BY EITHER DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY OR URGENT PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION COVERING POLITICAL STRIKES. MINISTER OF LABOUR REASONED, AND CABINET AGREED, THAT "IRON-FIST" APPROACH IN FACE OF WHAT WAS ALREADY A CHARGED ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND UNIONS WOULD RISK TYING UP WELLINGTON PORT FOR MORE THAN JUST SIX DAYS OF TRUXTON VISIT. THUS, WATERSIDE UNIONS IN SOME MEASURE "WON" THE TRUXTON BATTLE AS THEY REFUSED TO RETURN TO WORK UNTIL SHIP DEPARTED, BUT GOVERNMENT HAS LET IT BE KNOWN THAT IT WILL SHORTLY INTRODUCE LEGISLATION ENABLING IT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO DEAL FIRMLY WITH ANY FUTURE POLITICAL STRIKES. LABOUR OPPOSITION PARTY HAS BEEN GENERALLY MUTED THROUGHOUT VISIT. THE FACT THAT NO LABOUR MPS VISITED THE SHIP, AND THAT THREE INITIAL ACCEPTANCES BY LABOURITES FOR SHIPBOARD DINNER WERE SUBSEQUENTLY CHANGED TO REGRETS, MAKES IT CLEAR THAT REFUSALS WERE MADE MATTER OF PARTY POLICY.

5. WHILE MAIN ACTION WAS TAKING PLACE IN WELLINGTON, SEVERAL GROUPS OF PROVINCIAL EXTREMISTS ALSO SOUGHT TO GET INTO ACT. THESE RANGED FROM THE VIOLENT ONES IN CHRISTCHURCH WHO FELLED ONE US NAVY ANTARCTICA COMMUNICATIONS ANTENNA TO AUCKLAND PEACE GROUP WHO BRIEFLY HELD DEMONSTRATION/SIT-IN AT AUCKLAND CONSULATE GENERAL. A TINY GROUP OF ANTI-NUCLEAR PICKETERS MAINTAINED THEIR QUAYSIDE VIGIL THROUGHOUT THE SIX DAYS. AND ON THE BIZARRE FRINGES WERE THE LAY-PREACHER WHO ATTEMPTED TO PLACE HIMSELF IN FRONT OF THE PM'S LIMOUSINE (FINED \$200 FOR DISORDERLY BEHAVIOR AND OBSCENE LANGUAGE), AND ASTROLOGER/OCCULTIST WHO SOUGHT WRIT OF ARREST AGAINST TRUXTON'S CAPTAIN TALLY FOR TRANSPORTATION OF "EXPLOSIVE DEVICE" WITH "RECKLESS DISREGARD FOR SAFETY OF OTHERS" (CASE HELD OVER TO SEPTEMBER 15).

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT BOTH SHORT AND LONG TERM POLITICAL EFFECT OF TRUXTON VISIT WILL BE BENEFICIAL. IT HAS VISIBLY DEMONSTRATED THE COINCIDENCE OF USG AND GNZ INTERESTS IN SOUTH PACIFIC AREA. IF FORCEFULLY SIGNALS NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN ANZUS AND ITS ABANDONMENT OF FORMER LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE SCHEME. WHILE ANTI-NUCLEAR OPPOSITION IN NEW ZEALAND IS EXTREMELY VOCAL, IT SEEMS TO BE APPRECIABLY LESS APPEALING AS POLITICAL ISSUE THAN LABOUR PARTY WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE. FROM THE PUBLIC REACTION WE HAVE WITNESSED, IT APPEARS PRIME MINISTER MULDOON AGAIN HAS DONE A MORE PROFESSIONAL JOB OF CALCULATING VOTER REACTION THAN HAS OPPOSITION LEADER ROWLING.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC/LABOR IMPACT IS
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MORE DIFFICULT. BEFORE ARRIVAL OF TRUXTON BOTH GOVERNMENT AND UNIONS HAD FOR SEVERAL MONTHS BEEN FLIRTING WITH CONFRONTATION ON PURELY TRADE UNION ISSUES. IN VIEW OF CONTINUING LABOR TURMOIL AND TRADITION OF TRANSPORTATION STOPPAGES DURING HOLIDAY PERIODS, IT IS NOT UNLIKELY THAT WELLINGTON PORT AND/OR COOK STRAIT FERRIES WOULD HAVE BEEN CLOSED DURING PAST SIX DAYS IN ANY EVENT. IT IS CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT WHILE THE PORT HAS BEGUN TO RETURN TO ITS USUAL SNAIL-LIKE PACE, UNIONS AND GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE SEEKING NEW AREAS TO TEST THEIR STRENGTH. TRUXTON VISIT MAY HAVE PROVIDED IMPETUS FOR GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO DEAL WITH FUTURE POLITICAL STRIKES, BUT TRADE UNION AGITATION AGAINST THE DEFLATIONARY MULDOON GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO GO ON WITH OR WITHOUT AMERICAN NPW VISITS. END COMMENT.

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